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ZENITISM: A POSSIBLE VIEW ON THE AVANT-GARDE RETREATS OF THE SOLITARY MODERNIST POETICS OF JOSIP SLAVENSKI²

Abstract: Dealing with connections Josip Slavenski have had with the members of Zenithist movement, this paper addresses the already in depth debated issues of Slavenski's modernism. Although the Slavenski's contact with Zenithist was short and occasional, and not sufficiently documented, it could be argued that some crucial aspects of his poetics are analogous to those propagated by Zenithist. Through surveying their relations, correspondence, Zenithist's notions of music, some of Slavenski's pieces, their connection is reconstructed showing that when it is more obvious it renders some of Slavenski's avant-garde gestures.

Key words: Josip Slavenski, Ljubomir Micić, Branko Ve Poljanski, Zenithism, modernism, futurism.

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‘Gospodine Marineti! Ja vas pozdravljam kao pokretača futurizma i kao čoveka koji je prvi digao zastavu i pozvao mladost na bunu. To činim kao predstavnik zenitizma u Parizu, po svojoj dužnosti. A pokretač zenitizma i direktor *Zenita*, takođe nema razloga da Vas takvog ne ceni. Ali, Vi kao propagator fašizma gubite naše simpatije. Protiv takvoga Marinetija dižemo svoj protest.

Marinetti: Hvala! Vi ipak nemate razloga za to, jer je fašizam poziv na borbu, a borba je zdrava i potrebna.

Poljanski: Zenitisti cene vašu borbu, ali ako je ona fašistička, onda između nas ne može biti bliže saradnje, pošto su fašisti zapalili slovenski “narodni Dom” u Trstu i bacili kroz plamen, dva živa čoveka sa trećeg sprata.

Marinetti (padajući u vatru): Tamo su se skrivali komunisti...

Poljanski: Komotan izgovor! I komunisti su ljudi!

Marinetti: Uostalom, zenitisti oduvek uživaju naše simpatije.

Poljanski: Dobro! I futuristi uživaju naše simpatije, ali fašisti vrše teror nad čestitim Hrvatima u Istri i zatvaraju naše škole.

Marinetti: Da li ste vi Srbin ili Hrvat?

Poljanski: Serbo!

Marinetti (diže jednu obrvu a levo oko mu zasja od čuđenja...)

(Pariz, 28. oktobra 1925. godine)³

Although obviously (re)constructed in an ecstatic Zenitist manner, the report on the encounter/dialogue between the creator of Futurism, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876–1944) and a Zenitist poet, Branko Ve Poljanski (c. 1900 – ?), penned

³ **Poljanski:** Mister Marinetti! I salute you as the founder of Futurism and as a man who first raised the flag and called the youth to rebellion. I do this as the representative of Zenitism in Paris, by my duty. And the founder of Zenitism and the manager of ‘Zenit’ has no reason either not to esteem you as such. But you, as a propagator of Fascism, lose our sympathy. Against such a Marinetti, we protest. – **Marinetti:** Thank you! You still have no reason to do so, because Fascism is a battle call, and battle is healthy and necessary. – **Poljanski:** The Zenitists appreciate your fight, but if it is Fascistic, then we can have no cooperation, because the Fascists burned down the Slovenian ‘National House’ in Trieste and threw two live men from the third floor, through the flames and down to the street. – **Marinetti** (losing his temper): The Communists were hiding there!... – **Poljanski:** A convenient excuse! The Communists are human beings too! – **Marinetti:** In any case, Zenitists have always enjoyed our affinities. – **Poljanski:** Good! Futurists too have had our sympathies, but the Fascists are terrorizing honest Croats in Istria and closing our schools. – **Marinetti:** Are you a Serb or a Croat? – **Poljanski:** Serbo! – **Marinetti** (raises an eyebrow and his left eye discretely glistens with amazement)...’ (Paris, 28th October 1925); ‘Dijalog Marineti – Poljanski, Pariz, 28. oktobra 1925’ [‘Dialogue Marinetti – Poljanski, Paris, 28th October 1925’] in: Z. Markuš, *Zenitizam [Zenitism]*, Belgrade, Signature, 2003, 167–169.

by the latter, in our examination sheds an important light not only on the relationship between Futurism and Zenitism, more precisely the Futurists and the Zenitists,⁴ but first and foremost on the issue of Serbian–Croatian relationships through the perspective of a Zenitist, none other than Branislav Micić the brother of the movement’s founder, Ljubomir Micić (1895–1971), a Serb from Croatia. Especially having in mind that there are indications that the encounter at Café de la Paix (what an appropriate place to talk about Fascism) was perhaps attended by Josip Slavenski the composer,⁵ a Međimurje Croat by birth, a Belgrader by residence, while by his sentiment of belonging to Slavism and the Balkans, one can freely declare him a Zenitist. The alleged attendance of Josip Slavenski (1885–1955) at the meeting of Poljanski and Marinetti is yet another of numerous unreliable scant data regarding both his sojourn in Paris in late 1925 and his real ‘engagement’ in the sphere of Zenitism. Hence this item should be understood as yet another attempt⁶ to shed light on those junctions between Slavenski and the Zenitists – both in the domain of historiographic data confirming their mutual connections and of the contexts and areas which formed their ideas and artistic poetics – from the perspective of the narrative on avant-garde retreats which Josip Slavenski’s modernistic spirit sometimes gravitated to and occasionally took refuge in.

⁴ On the junctions of Futurism and Zenitism, ideological and concrete, more exhaustively in: *Ibid.*

⁵ ‘Marinetijevom predavanju “Futurizam ili pasatizam, fašizam ili antifašizam”, održanom na Slobodnoj ženskoj tribini prisustvovao je i Poljanski. Na njegov zahtev sledećeg dana je došlo do susreta između futurista i zenitista u Café de la Paix. Od strane futurista sastanku su prisustvovali Marinetti i slikari Enriko Prampolini i Fortunato Depero, a sa zenitističke strane Poljanski, slikar Mirko Kujačić i (možda) kompozitor Josip Slavenski’ [‘Marinetti’s lecture “Futurism or Passatism, Fascism or Antifascism”, held at a Free Women’s Rostrum, was attended also by Poljanski. At his request, the next day a meeting occurred between the Futurists and the Zenitists at the Café de la Paix. On the Futurists’ side there were Marinetti and the painters Enrico Prampolini and Fortunato Depero, and on the Zenitists’ side there were Poljanski, the painter Mirko Kujačić and (perhaps) the composer Josip Slavenski’]; *Ibid.*, 32.

⁶ Musicological accounts in the Serbian language dedicated to the relationship between Slavenski and the Zenitists are: S. Grujić, ‘Veze Josipa Slavenskog sa zenitističkim pokretom dvadesetih godina’ [‘Connections of Josip Slavenski with the Zenitist Movement in the Twenties’], *Međimurje*, 3, 1983, 53–63; M. Milin, ‘Tonovi naricanja, melanholijske i divljine – zenitistička pobuna i muzika’ [‘Tones of Wailing, Melancholy and Wilderness – Zenitist Rebellion and Music’], *Muzikologija*, 5, 2005, 131–144. Meanwhile, in Slavenski’s heritage Ana Kotevska found two self-portraits which Irina Subotić, PhD, in a recent article analyzed as possible Zenitist works by Slavenski. I. Subotić, ‘Two Self-Portraits of Josip Štolcer Slavenski’, *Internacionalni časopis za muziku Novi Zvuk*, 33, 2009, 81–92. The self-portraits were made in 1926 and are kept in Slavenski’s Legacy in Belgrade.

Josip Štolcer, after his studies in Prague (even before which, according to the 'Slavonic nature of his music', he added the pseudonym Slavenski to his family name as an 'early' sign of his spiritual and genetic belonging to the Slavic area and culture)⁷ and the short sojourn in Zagreb, in 1924 started to work in Belgrade as a lecturer at the Music School.⁸ It is not known if Slavenski, during his one-year stay in Zagreb, met Mikić or had an opportunity to read *Zenit*. Milana Slavenski points out that Slavenski was closer to Poljanski,⁹ with whom, as documented in *Zenit*, he would keep in touch, during the next school year (1925–1926), while he stayed in Paris.¹⁰

Zenitists had a characteristically 'stern' attitude towards music and they addressed their harshest criticisms at (romantic) opera, but also at the contemporary trends in popular music. Still, they did not 'dare' speak about music often – more precisely, they put it very early at the place they thought it deserved and thus dissociated from the need to deal with it further. 'Muzika je jedina oduvek bila umetnost samo zato što je apstraktna i što ne "predstavlja" ništa' ['Only mu-

⁷ The data on the family name are varied. While the composer's wife claims that the earliest document signed Josip Štolcer-Slavenski is a letter to Krenetić dated 16th April 1923, she does not deny that there are some earlier manuscripts with that signature, which corresponds to the interpretations of Eva Sedak (cf. E. Sedak, *Josip Štolcer Slavenski, Skladatelj prelaza [Josip Štolcer Slavenski, Composer of Transition]*, Zagreb, Muzičko informativni centar koncertne direkcije Zagreb i Muzikološki zavod Muzičke akademije Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 1984, 1, 236). Also, while Sedak uses the explanation from the 'Slavonic character of the music', Milana Slavenski says that Slavenski explained the addition to the name thus: 'Nisam hteo da me smatraju Nemcem. (...) Hteo sam da se odmah zna ko sam.' ['I did not want to be considered a German. (...) I wanted to make it immediately clear who I was.'] M. Slavenski, *Josip*, Belgrade, SOKOJ-MIC, 2006, 57. The signatures and notes on the manuscripts are almost 'Zenitist' in their combining the Cyrillic and Latin script, as well as various languages. Slavenski officially took the name for himself and his family in 1932. Cf.: *ibid.*, 58.

⁸ At the invitation of Jovan Zorko, Slavenski began to work at the Music School (now Mokranjac School) in the autumn of 1924. Ever since, until his death in 1955, he stayed in Belgrade, where later he worked as a lecturer at the Music School of the Music Academy, and finally, as a professor at the Music Academy. More details in: E. Sedak, *op. cit.*, 231–261; M. Slavenski, *op. cit.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, 71–74.

¹⁰ To date there are no precise data on the nature of Slavenski's stay in Paris. His wife claims that he was a holder of a French government's scholarship and that he registered for two semesters at the Schola Cantorum in Paris. Other information corroborates that he almost never attended the lectures, that he spoke the language badly and that Poljanski in fact helped him a lot in everyday life. *Ibid.*, 67–71. What is certain is that he signed a contract with the powerful German publisher Schott, at that time. It is interesting that it was exactly Poljanski who was Slavenski's 'translator', having in mind that Poljanski too spoke French badly. Cf. 'Dijalog Marineti – Poljanski', *op. cit.*, 167–169.

sic has always been an art just because it is abstract and does not “represent anything”]¹¹ – is one of the early statements of Ljubomir Micić. But if a criticism of society and of the establishment was necessary, music could have been functionalized in such a discourse. Hence Micić, starting from an opinion similar to the foregoing one, in the need to formulate ‘the new art’, would say:

‘kako je jedina muzika ostala dosledna u svojoj umetničkoj prirodi. Muzičar veže tonove i zvukove, daje ritam i dinamiku a sve to zajedno čini melodiju, koja u nama proizvodi ekstazu. Pa nikada, niko se nije pozvao na prirodu, jer sledstveno mnogobrojnim primedbama koje sam čuo i pročitao, i muzika bi bila osuđena, da reprodukuje rikanje volova, rzanje konja, ili plač Marije Magdalene pred nogama Hristosa. Zar, da to bude umetnost? Svi priznaju, da je opera umetnost (sem zenitista!) pa ja vas pitam, po pređašnjoj logici, da li ste igde čuli u prirodi muziku *Karmen*, ili pomamne divlje ritmove, odnosno muzičke paradokse Mokranjčevih rukoveti? Ili, gde ste u prirodi videli, da se ljubav izjavljuje pevajući i na onako nakaradan način, kako to čine operiski pevači?’¹²

Therefore, Micić calls on music for help only when he needs to ‘substantiate’ his ideas in his consistently ecstatic style, though he must have been aware of the fact that music is not his ‘highest trump’. Nothing new about music, we will add. In *Zenit’s* short history, there were but a handful of articles directly related to music – a short introduction on the composer Sergei Prokofiev,¹³ an account of the concert held at Glazbeni zavod in Zagreb in April 1922, which, was again directed to the promotion of Zenitist opinions and to the unavoidable criticism of the es-

¹¹ Lj. Micić, ‘Duh zenitizma’ [‘Spirit of Zenitism’], *Zenit*, 7, September 1921, 4.

¹² ‘[T]hat only music remained true to its artistic nature. A musician connects tones and sounds, gives rhythm and dynamics, and all of that together makes for the melody, which produces an ecstasy in us. Nobody ever used nature as a reference, because pursuant to the many remarks I have heard and read, music too would be condemned to reproduce bellowing of oxen, neighing of horses, or Mary Magdalene’s tears at Christ’s feet. Would that be art? Everybody (except Zenitists!) recognize opera for an art, so I ask you, according to previous logic, have you ever heard in nature the music of *Carmen*, or frantic wild rhythms, or musical paradoxes of Mokranjac’s rukovets? Or where have you heard in nature that love is expressed by singing, in such an ugly way as opera singers do?’; Lj. Micić, ‘Nova umetnost’ [‘New Art’], *Zenit*, 35, December 1924.

¹³ G. I., ‘Kompozitor Prokofjev’ [‘Composer Prokofiev’], *Zenit*, 17–18, *Ruska nova umetnost* [Russian New Art], September–October 1922, 57. We assume that the author signed is Ivan Gol. However, Vida Golubović thinks that the initials point to the pseudonym of the musicologist Boris Asafyev – Igor Glebov. Cf. M. Milin, ‘Tonovi naricanja, melanholije i divljine...’, op. cit., 137.

establishment, and dealt with the music of Igor Stravinsky and Antun Dobronić,¹⁴ while in one of the last issues, accounts of *Četvrti simfonijski koncert* [*The Fourth Symphonic Concert*] and *Prvi koncert jugoslovenske horske muzike* [*The First Concert of Yugoslav Choral Music*], truly served the promotion of the creators close to Zenitism, done with obligatory ‘stings’ aimed at (their) ‘enemies’. In the first account, the anonymous critic wrote that he was interested only in Krešimir Beničić’s works, in his *music* of landscapes. In the characteristic ‘educational-defamatory’ style, the ‘elemental power’ of Beničić’s music is glorified, and states that elemental music means no ‘connection to artificial and scholarly fabrications’. It is moreover disparagingly assessed that the audience would prefer his second composition, *Ples u brdima* [*Dance in the Mountains*], it being ‘conventional and melodic’. The attack is targeted at a Doctor of Philosophy, a critic for *Srpski književni glasnik* [*Serbian Literary Glasnik*] – admittedly unnamed, but certainly none other than Miloje Milojević who ‘po svoj prilici prespavao taj pomenuti koncert, da mu bude lakše doktorskoj duši’ [‘in all likelihood slept out the forgoing concert, not to overburden his doctoral soul’].¹⁵ Apart from a defamatory condemnation of ‘shimmy’,¹⁶ an announcement that among the newly published music books there was a Milojević book (sic!) on Bedřich Smetana¹⁷ and, obviously indirectly, on the concert which spurred Branko Ve Poljanski to write a short story ‘Atentat na koncertu’ [‘Assassination at a Concert’]¹⁸ – that would be all, i.e. all that is not directly related to Slavenski. And then, in October 1925, *Zenit* No. 36 published the composition ‘Dance Balcanique – Zagorski tamburaši’ [‘Dance Balcanique – Tamburitsa Players from Zagorje’]¹⁹ by Josip Slavenski, by which gesture Slavenski was clearly

¹⁴ ‘Stravinski – Nova muzika – Dobronić’ [‘Stravinsky – New Music – Dobronić’], *Zenit*, 13, April 1922, 23.

¹⁵ ‘Četvrti simfonijski koncert’ [‘The Fourth Symphonic Concert’], *Zenit*, 41, May 1926, 32.

¹⁶ The Zenitists did not praise popular music, most probably because it was a product of West European entertainment industries. Cf. Lj. Mikić (?), ‘Šimi na groblju Latinske četvrti’ [‘Shimmy at the Cemetery in the Quartier Latin’], *Zenit*, 12, March 1922, 14.

¹⁷ *Zenit*, 26–33, October 1924.

¹⁸ B. Poljanski, ‘Atentat na koncertu’, *Zenit*, 35, December 1924.

¹⁹ The front page, characteristically for *Zenit*’s typographical-orthographical-linguistic solutions, combines the French and Serbian languages as well as the Cyrillic and Latin script. We found out that the author copied the work for *Zenit*, and that it was a ‘transcription’ of a composition for the zither. Empty harmonies, a vehement dance rhythm speeding up, exclamations ‘hej, haj’ written in the score at the beginning indicate clearly the paradigms in the performance and musical practice of folklore. According to the author’s inscription, the work was written ‘u Zlataru, 1912. godine’ [‘in Zlatar, in 1912’]. *Zenit*, 36, October 1925, special appendix. It was later included in the piano suite *Sa Balkana* [*From the Balkans*] (1910–1917), edited by Schott, and is subtitled ‘Pevanja i igranja’ [‘Songs and Dances’] as its second movement and the first of the two ‘dances’ preceded by ‘songs’. This movement is conspicuously ‘different’ from the remain-

positioned as 'a friend of the Zenitists'. He publicly affirmed that friendship twice more in 1925.

In the jubilee issue of *Zenit* from the beginning of 1926, among the published congratulations and support letters to *Zenit* and its editorial board, we find a letter by Josip Slavenski from 'misty' Paris, dated on 25th December 1925.²⁰ In the letter, besides a congratulation to 'the dear friend', Slavenski ridicules Western 'culture', which only made him see the meaning of the Zenitist 'great and brilliant fight' more clearly, expressing the conviction that the Zenitist attitudes 'were in consonance' with Slavenski's earlier opinions on the potentials of Eastern cultures, first of all the Balkan ones, and the 'keywords' and that the notions of the movements, such as East, Sun, (macro)Cosmos, Chaos, primeval inception, light, work etc. could be 'read' in almost the complete Slavenski's opus, either directly or, more often, indirectly/metaphorically transposed into music.

Rebellious, leftist, bohemian (somewhat similar to Erik Satie's),²¹ and finally the avant-garde nature of Slavenski is more apparent in some of his works, and yet it almost never took the 'shape' of social troublemaking, so inherent in avant-garde artists. Still, in the section 'Makroskop' in *Zenit* No. 39 from 1926, reporting on 'zenitističkim demonstracijama u Parizu' ['Zenitist demonstrations in Paris'], Poljanski mentioned that Slavenski and Kujačić had been with him.²²

The friendly gesture was 'reciprocated' by the foregoing account of the First Concert of Yugoslav Choral Music in the 41st issue of *Zenit*, which once more served a partial purpose of rectifying the 'wrongs' against the fellow Zenitist and of displaying the ignorance and non-comprehension of the official critics.

ing ones, by some avant-garde harmonic solutions. For a detailed and exhaustive analysis see: Sedak, E., op. cit., I, 53-59.

²⁰ *Zenit*, 38, jubilee issue, February 1926.

²¹ They say he liked to appear publicly in a blue worker's suit, which is overwhelmingly reminiscent of Satie's costumes of 'Mr. Poor' or 'Velvet Gentlemen'.

²² According to Poljanski's testimony, during the visit of the German critic Alfred Kerr, Poljanski at a public lecture 'gromkim glasom' ['in a booming voice'] read the verses of Kerr's 'war' poem *Serbien muss Sterben* [*Serbia Must Die*]. 'U publici, zavladao je tišina pod suncem (underlined by V. M.). Ker je pozeleneo kao salamander. (...) Zviždalo se i utišavalo. Grupa zenitista (Poljanski, Slavenski, Kujačić) bila je ustrajna i neustrašiva.' ['The audience fell into silence under the sun. Kerr turned green as a salamander. (...) There was whistling and hushing. A group of Zenitists (Poljanski, Slavenski, Kujačić) was persevering and fearless.'] B. Poljanski, 'Zenitističke demonstracije u Parizu' ['Zenitist demonstrations in Paris'], *Makroskop*, *Zenit*, March 1926. The person mentioned is Milan Kujačić, avant-garde painter who played the role of Hipnotizer in *Sobareva metla* [*The Valet's Broom*]. Hence the same 'line-up' as at the foregoing encounter with Marinetti in 1925, which may be the reason for the assumption that Slavenski attended that meeting as well.

'I, opet, priznajemo lojalno, nas je interesovao samo Josip Štolcer-Slavenski. Za njega se kaže na pr. u katalogu da je "njegov Gudački Kvartet imao uspeha na muzičkim svečanostima u Donauesingenu." Međutim, Štolcer-Slavenski, sa svojim kvartetom *dobio je prvu nagradu*. Ali treba neko da bude *zenitista* ili da izrazi samo svoje simpatije, izgubiće sav "dobar glas" a svu njegovu vrednost progutaće pomrčina. Njegove stare kompozicije koje su pevane na tome koncertu iz vremena, dok je Štolcer-Slavenski hodao još u kratkim pantalonama muzike, one su bile "najmodernije" prema shvatanju naših muzikanata. Izgleda, po svemu, da Štolcer-Slavenski služi samo kao etiketa "moderne muzike". Stvarno, o njegovoj umetničkoj i muzičkoj snazi najmanje se vodi računa.

Neizbeživi doktor muzikologije pronašao je za njegovu kompoziciju *Molitvu dobrim očima* da, "osim *neprirodnih* poteškoća, nema ničega u sebi što bi nam moglo da izmami *umetničko priznanje*." E nazdravlje.²³

As already said, it is possible to find in Slavenski's opus some points of conceptually diverse and the monistic ideological network of Zenitism, in the sense of metaphorical transpositions into a compositional procedure, but also beyond it. Thus Boško Tokin's 'epopeja' ['épopée'] to 'čovek – sunce' ['man – sun'] or Micić's 'prštanje sunca' ['sputters of the sun']²⁴ can perhaps be close to Slavenski's radical orchestral work *Haos* [*Chaos*] from 1932, which in the original manuscript bore the title *Heliophonija* [*Heliophony*]. And chaos, according to Micić, is actually a necessary prerequisite of every creation for 'a Balkan man – the first Zenitist': a man is indeed a chaos, just like the cosmos. "Kosmos – Haos – Reč" ['Cosmos – Chaos – Word'],²⁵ said Micić, and Slavenski could have replied: 'Cosmos – Chaos – Sound'.

²³ 'And again, we loyally admit – we were interested only in Josip Štolcer-Slavenski. They say about him in e.g. the programme that "his String Quartet was successful in the music festival in Donaueschingen." However, Štolcer-Slavenski's quartet *was awarded the first prize*. But if someone is a Zenitist, or if he simply expresses his affinities, he will lose a "good name", and all his value will disappear without a trace. His old compositions sung at the concert, the ones dating back to when Štolcer-Slavenski still wore musical short trousers, were "the most modern" according to our music-makers' opinion. Indeed, his artistic and musical power was the least cared about.

The unavoidable *doctor* of musicology found that his composition *Molitva dobrim očima* [*Prayer to Good Eyes*], "apart from *unnatural* difficulties has nothing that would entice our *artistic acknowledgment*." Well, bless you.'; 'Prvi koncert jugoslovenske horske muzike', *Zenit*, 41, May 1926, 32.

²⁴ B. Tokin, 'Sunce i genije. Čovek – sunce' ['Sun and genius. Man – Sun'], *Zenit*, 6, July 1921, 2-3; Lj. Micić, 'Duh zenitizma', op. cit., 5.

²⁵ Lj. Micić, *ibid.*, 5.

The Balkans were an inexhaustible source of inspiration for Slavenski; hence we find numerous simulations of Balkan nations' dances and songs in many of his works. Let us just mention the symphonic suites *Balkanofonija* [*Balkanophony*] (1927) and *Četiri balkanske igre* [*Four Balkan Dances*] (1938), as well as the piano suite *Sa Balkana* [*From the Balkans*] (1917). It does no harm to mention that 'Balkan' inspirations in Slavenski's opus are met equally often and they represent a similar compositional procedure as the works of 'Yugoslav'²⁶ or 'Slavonic', or even more local 'Međimurje' inspiration (e.g. *Slavenska sonata* [*Slavonic Sonata*] for violin and piano, 1924; *Jugoslovenska svita* [*Yugoslav Suite*] for piano, 1921; *Iz Jugoslavije* [*From Yugoslavia*], piano suite; *Jugoslovenska pesma i igra* [*Yugoslav Song and Dance*] for violin; the foregoing Balkan dance titled 'Zagorski tamburaši' from 1912, published in *Zenit*) – as if we are dealing with one and the same, monistically structured project which at various times took various shapes of (ideological?) appearance. However, the Balkans is the notion that ties Slavenski with the Zenitists most firmly. By its significance, it is followed by the notion of the East.

'Religija osećanja i misli rađa se na JUGOISTOKU koji se digao i koji će nositi zastavu' ['The religion of emotions and thoughts is being born in the SOUTH-EAST, which has risen and which will bear the flag'],²⁷ wrote Micić describing the spirit of Zenitism. Later he states that 'the idea of the East is wide', confirming again his anti-Western position. Can we then think about perhaps the most renowned Josip Slavenski's composition, *Simfonija Orijenta* [*Symphony of the Orient*] (1926–1934) for choir and symphony orchestra, from the (Zenitist) perspective turned towards the East? Let us just say that the earlier titles of the work are – the best-known, *Religiofonija* [*Religiophony*], then *Aziefonija* [*Asiaphony*], *Simfonija Istoka* [*Symphony of the East*], *Etnofonija* [*Ethnophony*], *scenski oratorij za zbor i orkestar* [*stage oratorio for choir and orchestra*], *scenska kantata* [*stage cantata*]. We shall mention some very convincing evidence for the conclusion that *Simfonija Orijenta* (by the movement order and by the fact that one manuscript version of the movement *Hrišćani* [*Christians*] bears the marking 'scenski oratorijum' ['stage oratorio'], which is actually the closest to the idea that existed in 1917) and is in fact one of the real results of the never-realized idea about 'simfonička opera' ['symphonic opera'] *Stvaranje* [*Genesis*], which after all is the origin of *Haos*

²⁶ More thoroughly, not only on the works of Yugoslav 'orientation' but also on the mutual 'motivic' permeation of Slavenski's opus elements, which led the researchers all the way back to the composer's idea about *Prasimfonija* [*Protosymphony*], as well as on Slavenski's notions of the East, see: M. Živković, 'Jugoslovenstvo Josipa Slavenskog' ['Yugoslavism of Josip Slavenski'], in: Mirjana Živković (ed), *Josip Slavenski i njegovo doba*, Zbornik sa naučnog skupa povodom pedeset godina od kompozitorove smrti, Belgrade, SOKOJ-MIC, FMU, Muzikološki institut SANU, 2006, 13–27.

²⁷ Lj. Micić, 'Duh zenitizma', op. cit., 4

for symphony orchestra.²⁸ Thus the '(proto)Zenitist' points of Slavenski's poetics are connected by tight and colourful strings of time. They receive their 'real' musical realization in that part of Slavenski's creation which is primarily (but not exclusively) characterized by researching the particulars of sound (first of all, *Muzika u prirodnom tonskom sistemu* [*Music in Natural Tone System*], 1937). In these researches, Slavenski would rely on natural sciences (astronomy, acoustics, physics), trying to transpose their laws into sound. While the aspect of his creation which can be connected to (folk) tradition is somewhat more 'literary' blended well with the Zenitist discourse on the Balkans, while the 'search for the new sound' was exactly the place where Slavenski realized his music-wise, lonesome, avant-garde experimental 'oases' / retreats which indirectly can be related to (not only) the Zenitist discourse on 'the natural' which 'the new art' and thus 'new life' too stems from, on cosmos, chaos... In the feedback, by stepping out of these retreats, Slavenski realized his 'Balkan' procedure also in the colours of a (radical) modernist.

Translated by Goran Kapetanović

Весна Микић

ЗЕНИТИЗАМ: МОГУЋИ ПОГЛЕД НА АВАНГАРДНА УТОЧИШТА ОСАМЉЕНЕ
МОДЕРНИСТИЧКЕ ПОЕТИКЕ ЈОСИПА СЛАВЕНСКОГ

САЖЕТАК

Рад представља нови прилог разматрању веза између припадника зенитистичког покрета и Јосипа Славенског. Нова интерпретација познатих чињеница о сусретима и сарадњи Славенског и зенитиста, као и заједничких „стратешких“ тачака њихових модернизма, омогућава нам још један поглед на неке авангардне стваралачке одлуке Јосипа Славенског. Мада су овде, можда парадоксално, протумачена као „авангардна уточишта“, рекло би се да она то одиста и јесу у тренуцима у којима је модернистички импулс Јосипа Славенског постајао одвећ снажан за контекст у којем је обитавао.

Кључне речи: Јосип Славенски, Љубомир Мицић, Бранко Ве Пољански, зенитизам, модернизам, футуризам.

²⁸ More details on *Stvaranje* and *Misterij* [*Mystery*], possible origination points of larger part of Josip Slavenski's opus, see in: E. Sedak, op. cit., 231–261. The idea about an interdisciplinary work connects Slavenski not only to his predecessors – composers such as Wagner and most of all Scriabin – but also to Rastko Petrović's notions of interdisciplinary art, and even to the Zenitists.